

Northwest Arkansas Oral History Project
Orpha Wardlaw Interview Abstract
June 13, 2018

Interviewee	Orpha Wardlaw
Year of birth	1932
Place of birth	Ripley; Payne County, Oklahoma
Interviewer	Connie Fetters
Interview date	2018-06-13
Interview location	Maysville Community Center; Maysville, Benton County, Arkansas
Keywords	<p>Wardlaw, Orpha Wardlaw, John Arthur Fetters, Connie Cushing, Payne County, Oklahoma Gravette, Benton County, Arkansas Maysville, Benton County, Arkansas Southwest City, McDonald County, Missouri Tulsa, Tulsa County, Oklahoma Bible Church; Maysville, Benton County, Arkansas Eastern Star; Maysville, Benton County; Arkansas Extension Homemakers; Maysville, Benton County, Arkansas Canning and preserving Churches Education Farming Military Music Oil and gas industry Quilting Schools Sewing Small town life Walmart World War II</p>
Description	<p>For the first twenty-four years of Orpha Wardlaw's life she called herself a 'town girl'. Then in 1956 she married John Arthur Wardlaw, moved to Maysville, and became a 'country girl'. That remains true today.</p> <p>Growing up in Cushing Oklahoma with a father who worked in the local oil/gas industry, Wardlaw learned at an early age the entire process. She remembers, when she was nine, World War II brought changes to her life. The day Pearl Harbor was bombed everyone walked around stunned and talked in whispers. Blinders were put on windows so light could not be seen by the enemy. While she and friends would see trainloads of tanks, jeeps, and soldiers go through town, all knew never to talk about anything you saw. Rationing meant using your coupons to buy shoes, sugar, and gas. A candy bar was a real</p>

	<p>treat.</p> <p>After high school Wardlaw went to college and secretarial school, living for a while in Oklahoma City and Tulsa. She remembers working for the Oil Well Division of U.S. Steel and operating the telegraph machine to submit orders.</p> <p>The Wardlaw family had farmed around Maysville for many years. When John Arthur returned from military service in occupied Germany, he took over the dairy part of the farm. It was this farm living that greeted Wardlaw following her marriage. It took some getting used to including talking on a party telephone line, traveling on unpaved roads, and finding a new church. It also meant living near the friendly community of Maysville, sitting with women friends at the grocery store on Saturdays, and becoming a member of the Maysville Bible Church.</p> <p>Wardlaw shares memories of her busy life. She and her husband raised three daughters. Like her husband, their oldest daughter spent time at the school in Southwest City. Later the daughters attended schools in Maysville and Gravette. School activities and farming chores kept everyone busy. Yet Wardlaw found time to use her seamstress skills to make costumes for the school plays, musical talents to teach piano to students at several area schools and churches, and even time to bring the accordion out. She joined Eastern Star, serving as various local and state officials. For over 50 years, Wardlaw has been a member of the Maysville Extension Homemakers.</p> <p>Today Wardlaw lives about two miles outside Maysville in the home she and her husband built in 1967. She enjoys traveling to see family, playing the piano, and hand quilting.</p>
Duration	55 minutes
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Questions or Comments	https://nwaoralhistory.org
Interview sidebar	Wardlaw believes the biggest change in Northwest Arkansas is that "the population is much denser than when I came...of course that's brought about by Walmart as I am sure you know...what stands out the most, is going to Walmart and finding all you need at one place." [00:52:20]